

**FINDING THE**

# **COMMON GROUND**



## **Kent State University Bateman Blue**

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### Executive Summary

Journalists have been historically targeted as invasive and distributors of “fake news,” according to the United Nations of Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization<sup>1</sup>, while public relations professionals are often described as “spinners,” referred to

in Everything-PR.<sup>2</sup> Both industries are seen to create poor representations of their subjects while spreading inconsistencies to their audiences. We live in a world where we see accusations of “fake news” and false representations of events and circumstances flood social media and news outlets. This lack of civility only evokes more negative perceptions of these industries while distancing certain audiences from them. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has taken the initiative to embrace civility as a platform, challenging public relations professionals and journalists to think critically about civility and their influence on civil discourse.

It is important to find a Common Ground in the media, a place where journalists and media producers can connect with their communities while sharing legitimate work, free of internal bias and without excluding any one audience. In journalism and public relations, these ideations serve as the backbone of these industries. By prioritizing civil behavior in their work, these industries have the ability to grow and connect with the audiences they reach. Consequently, not being able to reach the level of civility needed in their work, these fields risk backlash and stigma from their intended publics. It is important that journalists and PR professionals work as role models to promote civility and educate others.

With civility, individuals in cohesive conversations where all parties feel accepted, heard, and valid. No one is excluded or made to feel targeted or unappreciated. With incivility, that's just what happens -- people feeling offended, overlooked and uncomfortable.

In this campaign, Kent State University's Bateman Blue team explored how to identify and facilitate common ground among media, PR and their audiences. From surveys that the team conducted with Kent State Student Media Members, they found that 66.7% of Student Media members surveyed do not all have a common idea of how their roles as journalists pertain to civility. Education is a primary way of providing these creators with the tools to understand their impact. The team set out to show the power and responsibility that lies with creating and publishing work in the media. The team's goal was to educate these students about the importance of civility and its impact.

“BY USING INFORMATION TOOLS,  
IDEAS, AND OTHER EVIDENCE,  
YOU CAN RESTORE THE LOST  
MIDDLE GROUND THAT DEFINES  
CIVILITY”

- DR. ELIZABETH FONDREN

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>

<sup>2</sup> <https://everything-pr.com/why-public-relations-can-no-longer-rely-on-spin-2/>



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

Bateman Blue created a campaign that provided student media members and public relations students with the tools to develop a stronger understanding of the importance of civility and what it looks like in their work. The team discovered that there is a mutual understanding between journalists and public relations professionals. Though separate fields, there is a common goal to reach their audiences with civility. The team designed their campaign to influence the need to bridge the gap between the professions and advocate civil discourse between them. Through evaluation and analysis, students who participated in the campaign are better educated on how to find common ground in the work they produce while understanding the tools necessary to do so.

### Campaign Highlights:

**35** Student Media members attended a civility tips tabling event

**29** Student Media members signed a civility pledge

**19** Student Media attendees at The School of Media and Journalism (MDJ) Civility Panel



## Situation Analysis

The membership of both PRSA and PRSSA totals around 30,000 members, making it the largest organization of communications professionals in the world. PRSA is uniquely positioned to tackle the issue of civility due to the diverse communities that members have access to. PRSSA offers multiple opportunities to further the discussion about civility as well as promote it and guide the future of the public relations profession throughout more than 375 colleges and universities.

Due to the large impact of the media on its consumers, it is important that journalists, public relations professionals and students in these fields recognize their ability to impact and influence communities with the civility, or lack thereof, in their work. It is necessary for students within media settings to understand and implement the tools of civility within their work. This knowledge will then allow them to implement the concept of civility within their future professional careers.



# Secondary Research Summary

In terms of civility, America seems to be at a breaking point.

- According to Weber Shandwick, over 90 percent of Americans polled believe that Civility is a problem, with 63 percent classifying it as a major issue.<sup>3</sup>
- 94 percent of Gen Z believe that there is a problem with civility.<sup>4</sup>
- 90 percent of Gen Z have experienced incivility.<sup>4</sup>
- 60 percent have been involved in incivility in school specifically, but not all is lost. Of all the generations polled, Gen Z had the highest percentage of people that believed that incivility can be fixed.<sup>4</sup>

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics on Civility shows that Journalists have a blueprint on how to promote civility.<sup>5</sup> Research shows that there is a clear disconnect between journalists' justification of uncivil interviewing, reporting, and the audience's perception of their work.

Through Weber Shandwick, the team found Gen Z to be the most likely to advocate for civility, and journalists are uncertain of how they can influence civility.<sup>4</sup> These findings helped the team identify Kent State Student Media as their primary target audience. Through research, they found that public relations professionals play a significant role in media creation, leading them to identify public relations students as a secondary audience.

# Primary Research Summary

The Bateman Blue Team conducted seven interviews with journalism and public relations professors, students, professionals, as well as faculty and students involved with Kent State Student Media. The team also conducted a focus group with five Student Media members to learn about their understanding of civility and the problems they see within their industry. The team distributed two surveys; one for Kent State Student Media members and one for freshmen within the College of Communication and Information (CCI). The Student Media survey received 21 responses. The team faced a challenge receiving responses from surveys, but was able to reach over 40 student media members overall. From the primary research, the Bateman Blue team discovered key findings that influenced the "Finding Common Ground" campaign.

**“THE MEDIA IS PROVIDING A  
LITTLE BIT OF THIS DIVIDE  
BECAUSE FOR THE PEOPLE THAT  
JUST WANT ANSWERS, YOU’RE  
ALWAYS GETTING AN OPINION”**  
-BRANDON LEWIS, GM OF BLACK SQUIRREL RADIO

3 <https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CivilityInAmerica2019SolutionsforTomorrow.pdf>

4 <https://www.webershandwick.com/news/civility-in-america-a-gen-z-perspective/>

5 <https://www.spj.org/pdf/ethics/SPJ-Ethics-E-Book.pdf>



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Key Findings:

- One shared belief among interviewees and focus group participants was the importance of finding a common ground.
- Focus group participants agreed that there is too much opinion within the media.
- Focus group participants believed that it's a journalist's responsibility to cover a story with all sides represented.
- Interview subjects believe there is a problem with bias in the media.

Through the team's interviews, the impact of bias on civility amongst journalists is evident. Bateman Blue found that one of the most difficult things to do as a reporter is to stay unbiased. Reporters must recognize that bias exists and make a conscious effort to avoid it in their work.

The subjects expressed that the conversation around civility is never-ending. We can always grow and educate ourselves as we are “not perfect people,” said by the Director of Student Media at Kent State University.

## Publics

The Bateman Blue team targeted the primary public of Kent State Student Media members. These students represent 10 different Student Media outlets at Kent State University. Students are able to gain real-world experience in their career fields through involvement in these organizations as they report through various channels (print, digital, radio, etc.). Kent State Student Media students are heavily relied on to provide credible and timely information for other students as well as local Kent residents in the area. Throughout the campaign, the team reached over 40 Student Media members.

A second primary public for the Bateman Blue Team was freshmen in the College of Communication and Information (CCI,) located in Olson Hall. The team targeted this audience as they wanted to reach freshman students within these fields with the goal to educate and promote civility at the university and in their careers.

The team targeted public relations students at Kent State as a part of their secondary public. Public relations students are preparing to enter a field where communication through media will play a vital role in their relationships with their audiences and clients. Having an understanding how civility pertains to the public relations industry is vital in developing an awareness to the civil responsibilities that lie within the industry. The team also utilized public relations and journalism faculty to support their campaign and help educate students on the importance of civility, serving as major stakeholders throughout the campaign.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Theme

Bateman Blue's research proved that mutual understanding and compromise are necessary for civil discourse between journalists and PR professionals. To reach this mutual understanding, respect must be present in each conversation and among all individuals. When civil discourse isn't present, it's usually from a lack of respect and understanding. The team also discovered that a person's willingness to actively listen will directly influence whether they successfully find common ground with their opposer. The importance of finding common ground continued to emerge as the team conducted research and in-depth interviews.

FINDING THE

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GROUND

"Finding common ground" focuses on finding civility within yourself and the audience(s) that you are reaching through media creation.

### Key Messages

- Journalists have a role in promoting civility within their work. As members of the media, their work will directly reflect whether or not the media encourages civility.
- A relationship between journalists and PR professionals is necessary for both to succeed. Their diverse goals foster an organic, codependent relationship that requires support to thrive.
- If extreme personal bias isn't acknowledged and reduced, it can play a role in incivility.

### Objectives/Strategies/Tactics

**Objective 1:** To educate 75 Student Media members at Kent State about their role in civility.

**Strategy One:** Engaged Student Media members on the importance of civil discourse in the media through online channels.

**Tactic One:** Created a three-part podcast series shared on Spotify, Soundcloud, and YouTube, featuring Kent State journalism and public relations faculty. They covered the topics of how journalists have an impact on civility and what the different goals of public relations professionals and journalists are when producing media, portraying how we can "bridge the gap" between the fields. Finally, they provided information of how those working in Student Media can recognize their influence on civility in their work.

**Tactic Two:** Created a paid Instagram advertisement to promote the teams second podcast episode.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

**Strategy Two:** Utilized social media to promote and inform the target audience

**Tactic One:** Launched Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts to promote events and podcasts while educating the audience about what civility is through the team's research.

**Tactic Two:** Hosted an Instagram contest that encouraged followers to share content from the teams' page.

**Strategy Three:** Utilized face-to-face communication and a brochure to provide information about student's impact on civility.

**Tactic One:** Held an in-person and socially distanced "grab-n-go" event with freshmen at Kent State where the team provided students with civility brochures that included the team's definition of civility and tips on how they can promote civility in their own work.

### Evaluation, Objective 1: **EXCEEDED**

Bateman Blue successfully educated Student Media members at Kent State through their three-part podcast series, other social media efforts and a "grab-n-go" event. This podcast obtained 66 streams with 30 listeners on Spotify, 19 plays on Soundcloud, and 17 views on YouTube, all over the four-week implementation period. Additionally, Bateman Blue engaged with Student Media members through Instagram and Twitter, @KSUCCommonGround. Throughout the four-week implementation period, those social media channels gained 139 followers on Instagram and 24 followers on Twitter. Through the use of a paid Instagram ad, Bateman Blue had 40 Instagram users visit their profile and 20 Instagram users visit the link attached to the profile that led users to the civility pledge. Thirteen people entered the Instagram contest surrounding civility by sharing the team's definition of civility onto their Instagram Stories. Finally, 35 Student Media members in the College of Communication and Information Living Learning community attended the "grab-n-go" event. Ultimately, all of these metrics indicate that Bateman Blue educated more than 75 student media members

### **Objective Two: To motivate 50 Kent State Student Media members to participate in events to discuss their impact on civility.**

**Strategy One:** Planned special events to educate audiences about how journalists perceive civility and how to fight incivility.

**Tactic One:** Hosted an MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel via Microsoft Teams. Panelists included three MDJ faculty in journalism, and public relations and the ethics chair of Akron PRSA, who is a former newspaper editor. Panelists shared insight and recommendations on how students can keep civility at the forefront of their work throughout their college career and beyond.

**Tactic Two:** Broadcasted the event on Instagram Live to reach a larger audience of Student Media members.

**Tactic Three:** Held an in-person and socially distanced "grab-n-go" event with freshmen in CCI, including those involved with Student Media at Kent State, where the team provided them with civility brochures that included their definition of civility and tips on how they can promote civility in their own work.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

**Tactic Four:** Created a promoted advertisement for the MDJ Mingle event posted through KentWired's Twitter account, and on Instagram as an ad.

**Tactic Five:** Created a press release for the MDJ Mingle event, posted on the School of MDJ's website and Akron PRSA's website.

**Tactic Six:** Promoted events through the team's social accounts and printed flyers.

**Tactic Seven:** Created a paid advertisement through KentWired via Twitter

### Evaluation, Objective 2: **PARTIALLY MET**

Prior to the virtual panel event, the team created an RSVP form in order to keep track of everyone who showed interest in attending and compared it to who actually came to the event. Twenty-two people filled out the RSVP form and 19 people attended the event via Microsoft Teams. Additionally, the virtual panel event was also streamed live on Instagram. Forty-four followers of Bateman Blue's Instagram account attended this event through the Livestream, 11 of those being Student Media members at Kent State. Additionally, the team hosted an in-person and socially distanced "grab-n-go" event where they handed out a civility brochure that provided the tools to incorporate civility into their work. Thirty-five Student Media members in the College of Communication and Information Living Learning community attended the "grab-n-go" event. After the events, the attendees were encouraged to sign the civility pledge in order to strengthen what they had learned during the hour-long event.

### **Objective Three: To encourage 25 student media members at Kent State to take a pledge acknowledging their influence on civility.**

**Strategy One:** Distributed online pledge during events for audiences to acknowledge their role in promoting civility.

**Tactic One:** Created a pledge that all event attendees, including Student Media members, completed to portray their understanding of their impact of civility in regards to the content that they create within the media as Journalism and PR professionals while pledging to keep civility at the forefront of all future media that they may create.

### Evaluation, Objective 3: **EXCEEDED**

Thirty-eight people in total pledged to become leaders of civility. The team included a portion of the survey to indicate if the individual was involved with student media, providing them with the knowledge that twenty-nine Student Media members completed the survey. Bateman Blue received the most pledges after the virtual panel event the team hosted.

### **Objective Four: To educate 20 freshmen within the College of Communication and Information at Kent State on the importance of civility in media and their role as communicators.**

**Strategy One:** Engaged future journalists and communicators on the importance of civility in the media and their influence on it through an informal face-to-face tabling event.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

**Tactic One:** Held an in-person and socially distanced “grab-n-go” event College of Communication and Information targeting both CCI freshmen and student journalists.

**Tactic Two:** Utilized an incentive of a raffle for attendees featuring two different prizes. The first prize was a sponsored gift bag from Tree City, a local coffee shop in Kent, Ohio that included a gift card, travel mug, coffee, and other items alike. The second prize contained movies, snacks, and other movie night necessities.

**Tactic Three:** Passed out printed brochures, which included information and tips on fostering civility.

### Evaluation, Objective 4: **EXCEEDED**

In the pre-campaign survey, 46.7 percent of Student Media members said they did not understand the meaning of civil discourse and incivility. In the same survey, 66.7 percent of Student Media members said that they had no understanding, little understanding, or a moderate understanding of how civil discourse affects reporting. Thirty-five Student Media members who lived in the CCI Living Learning community attended the tabling event and received the team’s civility brochure. They will be able to use this civility brochure as a reference in order to promote civility when they are producing any type of media content. Through this objective, the team was able to reach their audience and lower the number of students who felt unsure about the meaning of civil discourse, measured a question in the pledge signifying that they now feel more educated on the topic of civility.

## Conclusion

The Kent State Bateman Blue team created awareness, educated and motivated audiences to dig deeper into civility. They were able to educate and spread awareness about the topic of civility within Kent State Student Media. The team used their theme of “Finding Common Ground” to spread the message of creating open-minded conversations among key publics. The team exceeded three objectives and partially met the fourth. The team created a podcast series, hosted a virtual panel discussion, created a pledge and formulated informational tools about the definition of civility for their key publics. Universities can use the basis of the Bateman Blue podcast to promote the topic of civility nationally. The beneficial aspect of the team’s podcast series is that it can be used for other universities across the nation. The “Finding Common Ground” solved the client’s challenge of promoting a topic that is not so commonly spoken about. Within our media today opinions and conversations are often opinionated and polarized. The client challenged students to find a simple compromise to this issue. The Bateman Blue team took this challenge and was determined to find the middle ground in every situation possible.



### **BATEMAN BLUE**

(From Left to Right)

Ashley Blood, Ben Vrobel,  
Camryn Stephens, Zach Zdanowicz,  
Hannah Mayer, Kayla Polansky



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Expenses

Expenses			Remaining budget
Item	Quantity	Cost	\$300
Instagram Ad	1	\$30	\$270
KentWired Ad	1	\$50.00	\$220.00
		Total spent: \$80.00	\$220.00
*Estimated value			

### In-Kind Donations

In-kind donations			Remaining budget
Item	Quantity	Cost	\$1,000
CCI brochure prints	57	\$1.71	\$998.29
Giveaway	1	\$19.37	\$978.92
Raffle baskets	2	\$25.67	\$953.25
Tree City coffee basket	1	*\$40.00	\$913.25
		Total used: \$86.75	\$913.25
*Estimated value			



### Obstacles

The biggest obstacle that the Bateman Blue team faced was obtaining civility pledges from Student Media members. Throughout the campaign, Bateman Blue was consistently engaging with Student Media members through direct lines of communication. The team directly reached out to the editor-in-chief of each Student Media on campus to help promote events. The team also utilized professors in leadership positions to promote the pledge to their students. With both communication tools exhausted, the students weren't originally as responsive as the team had planned for.

The team concluded that the all virtual campaign used to abide safety protocols directly influenced student participation. Students are flooded with emails and Zoom calls every day making it difficult to keep them engaged. Due to this, students weren't as responsive as the team originally hoped for.

Later in implementation, the team directly communicated with Student Media leaders via email. The team asked leaders to spread the civility pledge directly to their team of Student Media members. After these leaders made their team aware of the civility pledge, the pledge numbers dramatically increased. Student Media members became more responsive because of the trust that exists between them and their leadership team.

Survey responses is another obstacle that Bateman Blue faced. The team's student media survey received 21 responses and the CCI survey received 4 responses. The low response rate was most likely due to the team switching publics. Originally, the team targeted high school students interested in pursuing a student media related profession. As research progressed, the team narrowed their audience to students currently involved in student media. Due to time constraints, this shift in publics directly reflected the number of responses the team collected.

The next obstacle was the lack of MDJ Mingle RSVPs. Following research and insightful conversations, the team decided that the event should be cross streamed. Live streaming the event on Instagram created an easy opportunity for Student Media members to join the conversation through a platform that they're familiar with. Streaming the event on multiple platforms increased student engagement and attendance.



### Recommendations

After the implementation of Bateman Blue's "Finding Common Ground" campaign, the team discovered the importance of civil conversation through education. In order to increase awareness of the ideas of this campaign, PRSSA should use the campaign's educational tools to spread awareness nationally. The three podcasts that were released from the Bateman Blue campaign can be used as a basis to professors across the country to continue the conversation about civility within journalism, public relations and student media organizations. Through surveys and research, Bateman Blue found that many Kent State students were not aware of the impact of civility on modern day media.

Within the topic of civility, PRSSA can promote and spread awareness through educational tools as well as creating a civility section on the website. Based on the team's surveys and focus groups, not all students are familiar with what civility is in regards to the media. Using educational tools, such as the team's podcast, students will ultimately attain the knowledge of how to promote civility in their work as student journalists and aspiring public relations professionals.

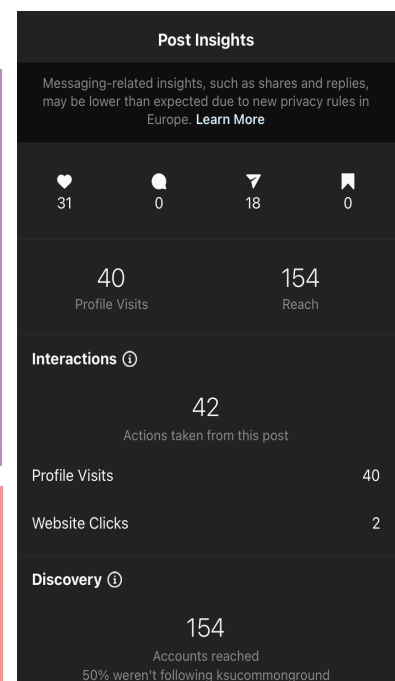
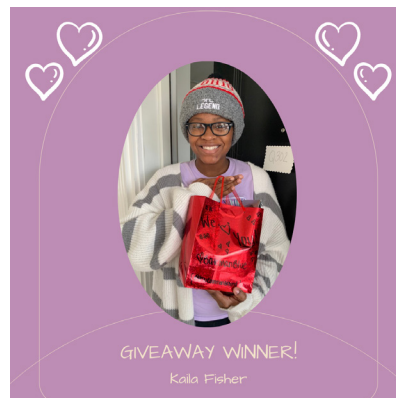
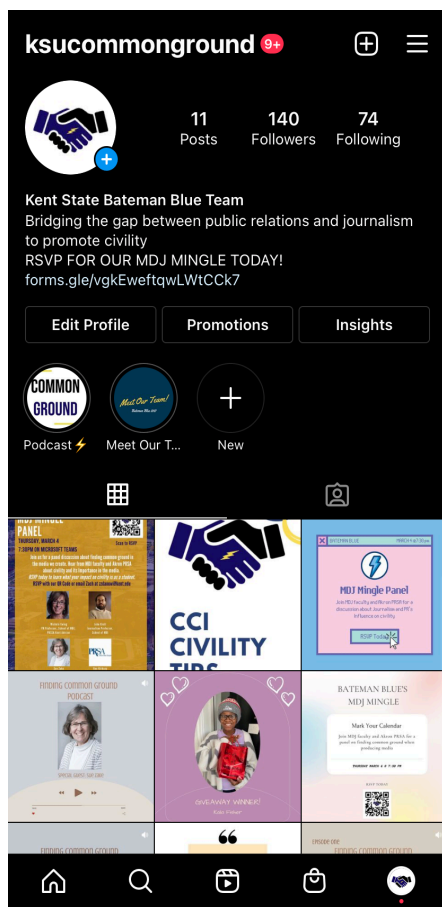
A suggestion for other universities is to work closely with the student media sectors at each school. Universities can host training sessions and produce educational tools for those involved in the student media sectors. Sharing these educational tools produced by the Bateman Blue team nationally is a way for universities to find a possible common ground. Not only can other universities find a common ground but can promote positive professional relations between different career paths in student media.



## Tactics Explained

### Instagram Civility Share

At the beginning of the campaign on February 17, the Bateman Blue team posted their definition of civility, “The ability to find a middle ground,” on their page and encouraged followers to share this post to their personal Instagram accounts, follow and tag the team @ksucommonground. By sharing the post, followers would be entered in a raffle to win a Valentine’s Day themed gift bag. The team can infer that they gained 10 followers the week that this event was launched and received 31 likes, and 12 shares of the civility definition onto follower’s personal Instagram accounts. Throughout the campaign, the Bateman Blue team heavily relied on their social media accounts to promote their message and events. The team achieved **over 175 followers combined over Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.**



“Journalism should try to support and encourage civil conversation.”

JOHN KROLL



# FINDING COMMON GROUND

## “Finding Common Ground” Civility Podcast

The Bateman Blue team created and hosted a series of three podcasts, entitled “**Finding Common Ground**,” surrounding different aspects of civility related to its relationship with the media. The team aired one podcast episode per week for three weeks, premiering on February 15, February 22, and February 29. The podcasts were presented on the team's Spotify, YouTube, and Soundcloud channels.

Professor Kroll discussed the relationship between civility and journalists, focusing on how to ensure civility when reporting and demonstrating the importance of civility in the field. In the second podcast, the team sat down with professors Luke Armour and Michele Ewing, faculty within the university's public relations sequence and who are involved with the Kent chapter of PRSSA. Here, the team discussed the differences between the public relations and journalism fields and how, with different media goals, civility is at the forefront in any work you do. The idea of “bridging the gap” between the fields to create more civil communications to the public was also a main focus. In the final podcast, Kent State Student Media Advisor Sue Zake was featured, discussing the impact that student media workers have on civility and how to incorporate this into their writing.

Overall, the team reached **66** streams with 30 listeners on Spotify, 19 plays on Soundcloud, and 17 Viewers on Youtube.

**COMMON GROUND**

PODCAST  
**Finding Common Ground**  
By KSU Common Ground  
4 Episodes

89 starts  
53 streams  
30 listeners  
7 followers

MANAGE TRAILER

4 EPISODES	STARTS	STREAMS	LISTENERS	PUBLISH DATE
<b>Episode 3</b> Finding Common Ground Podcast #3: Sue Zake	11	7	7	Mar 1, 2021
<b>Episode 2</b> Finding Common Ground #2: Michele Ewing and Luke Armour	29	17	16	Feb 22, 2021
<b>Episode 1</b> Finding Common Ground #1: John Kroll	34	22	18	Feb 15, 2021
<b>Episode 0</b> Finding the Common Ground: Intro	15	7	10	Feb 12, 2021

**Common Ground KSU**  
4 subscribers

HOME VIDEOS PLAYLISTS CHANNELS DISCUSSION ABOUT

Uploads PLAY ALL

- Finding Common Ground Podcast #3: Sue Zake  
5 views • 2 weeks ago
- Podcast #2: Michele Ewing and Luke Armour  
16 views • 3 weeks ago
- Finding Common Ground Episode #1: John Kroll  
7 views • 1 month ago
- Finding the Common Ground: Intro  
5 views • 1 month ago

**COMMON GROUND**  
KSU Common Ground  
Common Ground  
Kent, United States

All Popular tracks Tracks Albums Playlists Reposts

**Episode 1**  
Finding Common Ground #1: John Kroll  
4 tracks

52% of these uploads used



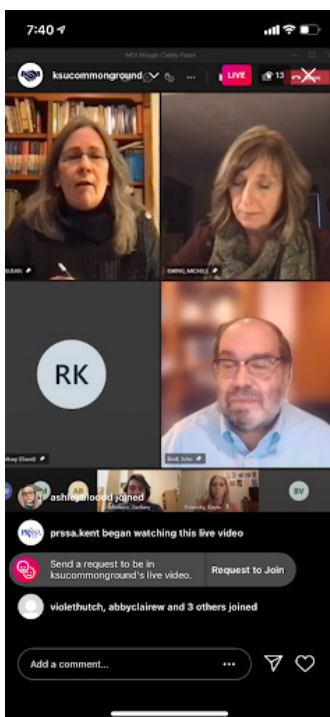
## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel

On March 4, 2021, the team hosted the “MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel”, which was a virtual event via Microsoft Teams and streamed on Instagram Live via the team’s account, @ksucommonground. On this panel, the team invited faculty from the School of Media and Journalism (MDJ) that were featured in the “Finding Common Ground” podcast back, professors John Kroll, Michele Ewing, Luke Armour, and Student Media’s Sue Zake, as well as Ron Kirksey, Ethics chair on the Akron PRSA board and former journalist.

Here, the Bateman team prepared questions for panelists that further discussed the importance of civility when it comes to creating media for a live audience of students, featuring those involved with Kent State Student Media. After the main questions, the team opened it up for questions from students attending the event live via Microsoft Teams, those streaming via Instagram live, or questions tweeted during the event using the hashtag **#commonground**.

The team had 19 attendees at the MDJ Mingle via Microsoft Teams with 7 being Kent State Student Media contributors. **44 people** joined the team’s Instagram live stream of the event, **11** being Kent State Student Media contributors. Across all platforms, the team reached **18 Kent State Student Media members**.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### CCI Commons Civility Tips

On March 2, 2021, the Bateman Blue team traveled to Olson Hall, home of the College of Communication and Information's Living Learning Community, The "CCI Commons," where a majority of freshman students in the college reside. Here, the team set up a safe and socially-distanced "grab-n-go" styled table event.

Members handed out brochures to CCI students containing their definition of civility, as well as tips for how students can work to keep civility in mind when producing media content. Students who attended the event were provided with insight and tools concerning civility, as well as being educated as to how their role as current and future members of Student Media has an impact on civility. Students were encouraged to post a photo of their brochures on their Instagram account, tagging the team @ksubatemanblue, receiving **three shares** overall. The team encouraged students to sign the team's civility pledge, signifying their knowledge and commitment to keep civility at the forefront of all work they do. The team provided a QR code to the civility pledge on the brochure, as well as a QR code to RSVP for the MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel event.

Through this event, the team reached **35 students** of the College of Communication and Information and attained **11 signatures** to their civility pledge. As an incentive to share the brochure and sign the civility pledge, the team entered each student who did so into a raffle to win one of two prize bags, one being donated to our team from Kent's local coffee shop "Tree City Coffee."



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Bateman Blue Civility Pledge

The team implemented a civility pledge that was administered to students who attended the CCI Civility Tips tabling event as well as the MDJ Mingle Panel on Civility event. By signing the pledge, students acknowledged their understanding of civility and how they play a role in promoting it through media creation. To sign means that they acknowledge their found understanding of civility, their impact of civility in regards to the content they create, how journalists, public relations professionals and other media contributors play a role in promoting civility, and ultimately promise to keep civility at the forefront of all future media they may create. Overall, the team reached 40 pledge signatures, 29 coming from members of Kent State Student Media.

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#### Section 1

By taking this pledge...

- I understand my impact of civility in regards to the content that I create within the media.
- I understand what civility means.
- I understand how journalists, public relations professionals and other media producers play a role in civility.
- I pledge to keep civility at the forefront of all future media that I may create.

Do you accept the pledge listed in the description above?

Yes, I accept the pledge.

#### Section 2

Please provide your email and name

Email:

Name:

Are you involved with Student Media?

Yes

No



# Communications Elements

## Podcast Email Template

The Bateman Blue Team formatted an email template to invite potential guests to the podcast series. The template began with information about the team and what they're attempting to achieve throughout their campaign. It also included details about the podcast and why the team saw each guest fitting for the series. After discussing the details of the upcoming MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel, the template ends by inviting email recipients to attend and be a part of said panel.

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Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am emailing you on behalf of the PRSSA Bateman Blue team. This semester, we have been working on a campaign to promote civility in media, focusing on a target audience of Kent State student media and journalism students, as well as freshmen in the CCI Commons Living Learning Community.

As a part of this campaign, we are looking to create three podcast episodes, discussing different individuals insights and impact on this community. We would love to have you as a guest on our podcast as we would like to dive deep and talk to you about your experience in \_\_\_\_\_. This episode would be held via Zoom and facilitated with myself and my teammate \_\_\_\_\_. We think that your experience and insight on this topic would bode well in educating our student media and journalism students. We are planning to air this podcast on our social media channels, including Soundcloud and YouTube, with promotions on Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. We hope to air this episode on \_\_\_\_\_. Please let us know if you would be interested in being a guest on our podcast and when would be a good time to meet with you!

Also, our team is planning to hold a "MDJ Mingle" on Thursday, March 4, 2021. During this event, we want to encourage student media and journalism students to interact with our podcast guests. We would love it if you were able and willing to attend and speak at this event, please let us know if this date would work well for you!

Thank you for your time.

Best,



### Kent State Student Media “Editor-in-Chief” Email Template:

In an attempt to promote the teams MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel event, they reached out to all ten Student Media partners at Kent State via their Editor-in-Chief, asking them to share the event details with each of their staff.

---

Hello,

I hope you are doing well! I wanted to reach out on behalf of the PRSSA Bateman Blue team that I am a part of this semester. We are currently working on our “Finding Common Ground” campaign discussing civility in the media and journalism and the impact student media members have on these topics. We think that student media plays a crucial role in promoting civility in their work.

We are holding our MDJ Mingle event this week and would appreciate it if you could help us spread the word to your staff. The event will be a virtual panel held on Thursday, March 4th at 7:30pm and will feature MDJ faculty as well as Akron PRSA. The professionals will discuss the role PR, journalism and the media have in helping to promote civility. This event will give student media members the opportunity to hear from professionals as well as ask them questions about their impact on civility.

Attached below is the flyer for the event and the RSVP.

As I said, we would love it if you could share this with your staff. Also, if you would like to attend the event we would love to have you!

RSVP: <https://forms.gle/z7ujTkuUBTa4GuqA8>

Thank you so much for your time and let me know if you have any questions!

Best,



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### MDJ Mingle Flyer

The Bateman Blue team created a flyer as a way to promote their MDJ Mingle and Civility Panel event. The flyer states the date, time, and location of the event as well as highlights the panel members that were in attendance and the topics that they will discuss. This flyer was posted in various places within Franklin Hall, where the School of MDJ is housed. Along with the informational aspect, the team included a QR code. Once scanned, the QR code brought the user to an RSVP link for the event. The flyer also offered the opportunity to RSVP for the event by emailing the team's project manager.



The flyer is titled "PRSSA BATEMAN BLUE'S MDJ MINGLE PANEL" and is scheduled for "THURSDAY, MARCH 4" at "7:30PM ON MICROSOFT TEAMS". It features a QR code with a handshake icon in the center, labeled "Scan to RSVP". The text invites attendees to a panel discussion about finding common ground in media, featuring MDJ faculty and Akron PRSA. It includes RSVP instructions: "RSVP today to learn what your impact on civility is as a student. RSVP with our QR Code or email Zach at [zzdanowi@kent.edu](mailto:zzdanowi@kent.edu)". Four panelists are listed with their photos and titles: Michele Ewing (PR Professor, School of MDJ; PRSSA Kent Advisor), John Kroll (Journalism Professor, School of MDJ), Sue Zake (Associate Professor, School of MDJ; Newsroom Advisor), and Ron Kirksey (Kirksey Communications, Akron PRSA). The footer contains logos for Kent State University, School of Media and Journalism, PRSSA Kent, and the College of Communication and Information.

**PRSSA BATEMAN BLUE'S**  
**MDJ MINGLE**  
**PANEL**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 4**  
**7:30PM ON MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Scan to RSVP**

Join us for a panel discussion about finding common ground in the media we create. Hear from MDJ faculty and Akron PRSA about civility and its Importance in the media.  
*RSVP today to learn what your impact on civility is as a student.*  
**RSVP with our QR Code or email Zach at [zzdanowi@kent.edu](mailto:zzdanowi@kent.edu)**

**Michele Ewing**  
PR Professor, School of MDJ;  
PRSSA Kent Advisor

**John Kroll**  
Journalism Professor,  
School of MDJ

**Sue Zake**  
Associate Professor, School of MDJ;  
Newsroom Advisor

**Ron Kirksey**  
Kirksey Communications,  
Akron PRSA

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY** | School of Media and Journalism | **PRSSA KENT** | **KENT STATE UNIVERSITY** | College of Communication and Information



### Bateman Blue Informational Press Release

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**Kent State University Public Relations Students  
Build Campaign to Find Common Ground and  
Promote Civility**

**COMMON  
GROUND**

(KENT, OHIO) - February 23, 2021: A group of Kent State public relations students who are participating in a national competition launched the Common Ground campaign to dig deeper into how media professionals and journalists can help improve civility in discourse.

The 2021 Bateman Blue Team is participating in the annual Public Relations Student Society of America's national Bateman competition. The team is actively researching, planning, implementing and evaluating a PR campaign to create awareness about the importance of civility. The campaign is targeting Kent State University students who are involved within student media as well as freshmen who are a part of the College of Communication and Information.

As part of their campaign the team has launched the "Finding Common Ground" podcast, which is centered around the role public relations, journalism and media have in helping to promote civility. The podcast features faculty within the School of Media and Journalism who talk about the different aspects of media and how each of them impact civility. Podcast episodes are aired every Monday and can be found on spotify and youtube.

In addition, the team will be hosting a virtual panel discussion on Thursday, March 4, where students, faculty and professionals will have the opportunity to discuss finding common ground when producing media. Attendees will also have the chance to mingle with the panelists as well as other students participating in the event. To participate in the event RSVP [here](#).

In addition, the team is planning a grab and go event in the CCI Living Learning Community where students can grab an informational bag to learn more about how they impact civility and can help others find common ground.

Follow along with the Bateman Blue Team for more information on their social media @KSUCommonGround. On their social media, the team promotes their campaign as well as upcoming events and interactive posts.




### Bateman Blue Informational Press Release (cont.)

#### About the Bateman Case Study Competition

The Bateman Case Study Competition is PRSSA's premier national case study competition for public relations students that gives them an opportunity to apply classroom education and internship experiences to create and implement a full public relations campaign. For the 2021 Bateman Competition, PRSSA Bateman teams have the opportunity to collaborate with PRSA to develop a civility campaign that will improve the standards and productivity of public discourse. Kent State has two teams participating in the annual competition. For more information about Bateman, visit <https://prssa.prssa.org/scholarships-and-awards/bateman-competition/>.

#### About PRSSA Kent

PRSSA Kent (<http://www.prssakent.com/>) was established in 1968 as one of the 14 original Alpha Chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America. Named the 2014 and 2019 Outstanding Chapter in the country, the student-run organization collaborates with its parent chapter, the Akron Area Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, to coordinate meetings and events offering professional development and networking opportunities to Kent State University students interested in the public relations and communications industry.



THE INDEPENDENT NEWS WEBSITE OF THE KENT STATER & TV2

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### Bateman Competition teams prepare for judging phase after engaging audiences

Austin Monigold  
Reporter  
Mar 15, 2021 Updated Mar 15, 2021



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### KENT STATE UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENTS BUILD CAMPAIGN TO FIND COMMON GROUND AND PROMOTE CIVILITY

Posted by akronprsa@gmail.com on 02/25/2021 9:22 am

Media contact:  
Camryn Stephens  
Kent State University  
Bateman Blue Team Member  
(216) 310-0036  
[Csteph22@kent.edu](mailto:Csteph22@kent.edu)

Kent State University Public Relations Students Build Campaign to Find Common Ground and Promote Civility



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### CCI Civility Brochure

The Bateman Blue team created this brochure for students in the CCI. The brochure was provided as an educational resource for students as they further their college careers. It informed students about the topic of civility and how they can promote civil discourse within their communities.



### Primary Research

Interview with [Bronwyn Wain](#), a junior journalism major with a political science minor, who served as a former politics beat reporter.

#### Key Takeaways:

- In her opinion, civility in reporting is about staying professional and not asking misleading questions.
- Journalism is not the time to give your opinion.
- Reporters' incivility will be reflected in their writing.
- She believes one of the hardest things as a reporter is staying unbiased because everyone has their own personal biases whether they recognize it or not.

**“[AS A JOURNALIST] I WANT TO BE KNOWN AS A MIDDLE-GROUNDER. I JUST WANT EVERYONE TO HAVE A VOICE AND FOR ME TO AMPLIFY THAT”**

**-BRONWYN WAIN**

Interview with [Eric Mansfield](#), Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist and assistant vice president of Kent State University's Communications and Marketing Department.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Poorly articulated ideas can lead to uncivil discourse.
- Summarizing and clarifying what someone said can cause less misunderstandings/incivility.
- Siloed media will frame your thinking and can lead to bias.
- If people are only consuming one perspective, that's the perspective that they'll spew.
- Accepting you have an internal bias is important in creating civility.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

Interview with [John Kroll](#), journalism professor at Kent State University and former reporter, copy-editor, photo editor, and page designer for newspapers including the Detroit Free Press, Chicago Sun-Times, and Cleveland Plain Dealer.

### Key Takeaways:

- He believes we are civil because of public shame and without that layer of public shame there's really nothing that is keeping us from saying or doing uncivil things.
- Journalists shouldn't deny that they have biases, but they can try to recognize that those biases exist and keep them separate from the work they produce.
- Every act of journalism is a choice.

Interview with [Kevin Dilley](#), director of student media at Kent State University.

### Key Takeaways:

- Emotions can cause us to become uncivil
- It's important to recognize and adjust when you notice you're becoming uncivil
- Incivility can erode trust in communities, relationships and friendships
- Incivility can come when you're not aware of your bias

Interview with [Mitch McKenney](#), journalism professor at Kent State University and served in newsrooms including the Akron Beacon Journal, The Palm Beach Post, and the Times-Union in Rochester, N.Y.

### Key Takeaways:

- The internet and comment sections have changed civility in public discourse.
- Social media is full of name-calling and being aggressive towards each other, rather than putting in the work to "find common ground" with each other.
- Within his teaching, if conversations begin to show signs of incivility, he addresses the situation by redirecting the focus rather than continuing a potential uncivil conversation.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

Interview with [Tim Roberts](#), public relations professor at Kent State University.

### Key Takeaways:

- When approaching civility as a philosophical approach one must have an empathetic and compassionate mindset.
- As a reporter you should want to be seen as a trusted source of information.
- Civility looks different in person than over social media platforms. Face to face typically has a “filter”.
- Bias is an aspect in the media that can lead to disagreement and the lack of ability to find a common ground.

**“TRUST IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR SOCIETY, IT’S FUNDAMENTAL TO AN ORGANIZATION, AND IT’S FUNDAMENTAL TO SOMEONE BEING COVERED BY A REPORTER”**  
**-TIM ROBERTS**

Interview with [Susan Kirkman Zake](#), journalism professor at Kent State University and newsroom advisor for KSU student media.

### Key Takeaways:

- Civility is the ability to have a discussion with someone that doesn’t think the same way as you
- Incivility comes from people that aren’t making the effort to find a common ground
- To promote civility within journalism, you have to find the voices from all sides
- News formats are quick and extreme, therefore most news stations cover the edges, but covering the full depth may create more understanding.
- Digging into finding out what that diversity of thought is, can be really important with civility in journalism.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Focus Group:

Bateman Blue conducted a focus group on Feb. 26, 2021, including five Kent State students involved with Student Media. Throughout the focus group, the team was able to gain knowledge and understanding of Student Media member's perception of civility within media and journalism.

### Key Takeaways:

- Civility starts with the way reporters interact with their subjects.
- Reporters have to create a comfortable environment for their subjects in order to implement civil behaviors.
- There is too much opinion within the media.
- Bias will never be completely eliminated, but if one limits their bias by only writing facts, civility should naturally follow.
- It's a journalist's responsibility to cover a story with all sides represented.
- Incivility among the media will reassure the assumptions that people already have about the profession.

**“THE MEDIA IS PROVIDING A  
LITTLE BIT OF THIS DIVIDE  
BECAUSE FOR THE PEOPLE THAT  
JUST WANT ANSWERS, YOU’RE  
ALWAYS GETTING AN OPINION”**

**-BRANDON LEWIS, FOCUS GROUP MEMBER**



# Secondary Research

## Research on Civility

### What is Civility?

<https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/what-is-civility/>

**“CIVILITY IS CLAIMING AND CARING FOR ONE’S IDENTITY, NEEDS AND BELIEFS WITHOUT DEGRADING SOMEONE ELSE’S IN THE PROCESS”**

- Civility is more than politeness, but about disagreeing without disrespect.
- Civility is about seeking common ground
- Listening past one’s perceptions and encouraging others to do the same

### Civility in America: 2014

<https://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/civility-in-america-2014.pdf>

- The Millennial generation is most likely to have personally experienced incivility, with 90% saying they have experienced an uncivil episode.
- Nearly half of Millennials with children (48%) worry a great deal about children being cyberbullied, which is slightly higher than Gen X parents (43%). Their fears may be founded, since approximately one in five of each generation report that their child experienced cyberbullying (19% and 18%, respectively).
- In general, Americans of all ages are more likely to do nothing in the face of incivility rather than confront it. Sixty percent of all Americans report that they do little about incivility when they experience it.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Pew Research Center Study on Online Harassment

[https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2017/07/11/online-harassment-2017/pi\\_2017-07-11\\_online-harassment\\_0-01/](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2017/07/11/online-harassment-2017/pi_2017-07-11_online-harassment_0-01/)

- According to over 1,500 leaders and technology experts selected by Pew Internet Research center, most believed (81 percent) that the tone of online discourse will either stay the same or get worse over the next decade.
- Roughly four-in-ten Americans have personally experienced online harassment
- 14% of Americans have experienced online harassment related to their political views

### Bloomberg Report on Civility in Social Media

<https://www.bloomberg.com/press-releases/2019-06-26/nearly-two-thirds-of-the-american-public-believes-social-media-is-undermining-civility-in-america-all-demographic-groups-agree>

- Nearly Two-Thirds of the American Public Believes Social Media is Undermining Civility in America
- Contributing heavily to the cause of incivility is social media, with 63 percent of Americans saying that, in their experience, the impact of social media on civility has been more negative than positive.
- Only nine percent say it has been more positive than negative.

### Civility In America: 2019

<https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CivilityInAmerica2019SolutionsforTomorrow.pdf>

- Results show that the vast majority of Americans — 93% — identify incivility as a problem, with most classifying it as a “major” problem (68%).
- This disturbing rate has changed little since 2010.
- Among those who believe America's level of civility will get worse over the next few years, blame is placed on social media and the Internet (57%) followed by the White House (50%).

Compared to the average American, Civility Advocates are more likely to be:

- Gen Zs and Millennials
- Parents of kids under 18 years old
- African American or black
- From the Midwest, and less likely to be from the West
- Urban, and less likely to live in suburban areas
- 64 percent of Americans believe that elected officials should play a larger role in civility
- Higher percentage of women Americans believe that civility is a large problem than men



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Defining Civility In A Global Context

<https://www.torchonline.com/news/2020/11/06/defining-civility-in-a-global-context/>

**“CIVILITY IN REGARDS TO  
COMMUNICATION [IS] THE  
QUALITY AND ABILITY TO  
FIND A MIDDLE GROUND”**

- Dr. Elizabeth Fondren discussed how journalists can restore the lost middle ground that defines civility using the tools of information, ideas and evidence to give readers the broadest perspective. Journalists must keep the focus on facts, as well as proportionality

### An Antidote to Incivility

<https://hbr.org/2016/04/an-antidote-to-incivility>

- Positive emotions are heightened, both in the giver and receiver. A broaden and build effect takes place, as described in Barbara Fredrickson's work on positive emotions.
- When people are treated with respect, they feel more valued in their organizations, which in turn affects their ability to work well and contribute with energy.
- Relationships and trust are strengthened.
- Energy and enthusiasm is heightened.
- Performance at work improves, both as people rate their work and as their managers rate their work.
- Staff are more likely to be altruistic, courteous, helpful, and encouraging.
- Staff are more connected with co-workers; they feel valued and appreciated, which improves collaboration, a sense of safety in the team, and comfort with giving and receiving feedback.



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Benefits of Civility

<https://positivepsychologynews.com/news/amanda-horne/2013041025769>

- Bullying/Toxic culture shows how communities/schools/workplaces expect behaviors that are considerate, caring, kind, compassionate, courteous, polite, and respectful.
- We want people to overall be good citizens and value/appreciate others (we want individuals to be civil with one another.)
- The bullying culture and news that makes headlines increase the expectations of being a decent human because people are seeing the effects it has on others when bullying/toxic behavior is involved.
- Performance at work improves, both as people rate their work and as their managers rate their work.
- Relationships and trust are strengthened.
- When people are treated with respect, they feel more valued in their organizations, which in turn affects their ability to work well and contribute with energy.
- Positive emotions are heightened, both in the giver and receiver. A broaden and build effect takes place, as described in Barbara Fredrickson's work on positive emotions.

## Generation Z Focused Research

### Civility In America: A Gen Z Perspective

<https://www.webershandwick.com/news/civility-in-america-a-gen-z-perspective/>

- 94 percent of Gen Z see civility as a problem
- Gen Z believes that it can change (highest percentage from generations)
- Gen Z considers internet to be root of issues (61%)
- 90 percent of Gen Z has experienced incivility
- 60 percent of Gen Z have had it happen in school

### Why Do Different Generations Use Social Media?

<https://www.marketingcharts.com/digital/social-media-110652#:~:text=The%20research%20found%20that%20nearly,%25>

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Gen Z adults (ages 18-23 years old) actively use Instagram, followed by Snapchat (63%) and YouTube (62%). Facebook does, however, remain the most used platform for Millennials (74%), Gen X (68%) and Boomers (61%).



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Gen Z & Millennials' 5 Favorite Social Media Platforms Now

<https://www.ypulse.com/article/2020/05/06/gen-z-millennials-5-favorite-social-media-platforms-now/>

Their Favorite Social Platforms to Use Now

13-18-year-olds	19-25-year-olds	26-37-year-olds
1. Instagram	1. Instagram	1. Facebook
2. YouTube	2. TikTok	2. Instagram
3. Snapchat	3. Snapchat	3. YouTube
4. TikTok	4. Facebook	4. Twitter
5. Twitter	5. YouTube	5. TikTok

Source: YPulse Survey n=1000 ages 13-39 | April 2020

## Student Research

### An Analysis of Campus Civility

<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2642&context=etd>

**“WE TALK ABOUT VIOLENCE, WE TALK ABOUT POLICIES, BUT WE DON'T TALK ABOUT WHAT DOES CIVILITY MEAN, SO I THINK A MORE CONSCIOUS DISCUSSION AS PART OF THE CAMPUS DIALOGUE AROUND WHAT ARE OUR VALUES WOULD BE HELPFUL.”**

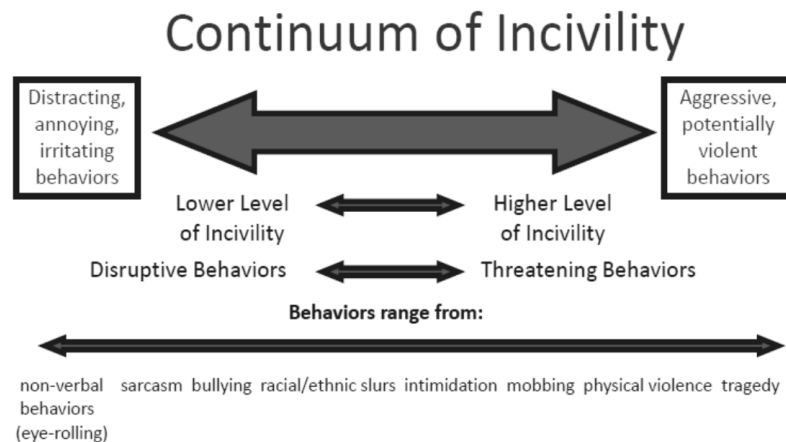
- Student Affairs Professionals value student-led programs and peer-to-peer initiatives, as well as programs that relate to current issues, promoting community, and creating an inclusive and diverse culture
- Creating programs that are led by other students is important as it allows for students to hear from their peers and to be guided through difficult and challenging topics with their peers, who are typically close in age to other students and are sharing similar experiences as other students
- Student Affairs Professionals need to create centralized efforts to promote civility on their campuses
- “Well I think understanding what our value is, and the definition for what is civility on our campus. We don't talk about those terms, we talk about violence, we talk about policies, but we don't talk about what does civility mean, so I think a more conscious discussion as part of the campus dialogue around what are our values would be helpful.”



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Faculty and First-year Students' Perceptions of Civility in College

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=9189&context=dissertations>



Clark © 2009, revised 2013, 2015

### Integrating Civility into the Classroom

<https://peer.asee.org/integrating-civility-into-the-classroom-practicing-and-teaching-civility-to-prepare-students-for-career-success.pdf>

- Civility can play a major role in students' ability to get along with classmates, co-workers and faculty while they pursue their educational goals.
- The rise of inappropriate behavior in society and the workplace has helped employers recognize the need for civility

#### **Benefits of civility, according to research done in study:**

- Can inspire perceptions of warmth and competence.
- Improves interpersonal relationships.
- Improves productivity.
- Overcomes negative conflict, bullying and violence.
- Avoids hostile work (and academic) environments.
- Helps prepare students for academic and professional success.
- Helps to promote respect for diversity by preventing discrimination and harassment.
- Encourages the sharing of information.
- Reduces stress by promoting positive relationships.
- Promotes engagement.



### Civility In Journalism Research

#### Journalistic Concern about Uncivil Political Talk in Digital News Media

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1940161214558748#>

“THERE IS A DISCONNECT BETWEEN JOURNALISTS’ JUSTIFICATION OF OVERLY AGGRESSIVE—OR UNCIVIL—INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES AS EXEMPLIFYING THEIR DEMOCRATIC WATCHDOG ROLE, LEADING TO LESS REGARD FOR AND TRUST OF PARTICULAR JOURNALISTS AND THE INSTITUTION IN GENERAL.”

Our analysis identified four main themes in journalists’ writing about civility, opinion, and commentary in digital news media, which relate to our three research questions. These themes are

- **Concern, or lack thereof, about uncivil mediated discourse through digital news media. This theme relates to all three research questions.**
- **The causes of an increase in opinion and incivility.**
- **Awareness of academic research about opinion and civility in news and reader comments.**
- **How journalists are dealing with the increase in opinion and incivility in online political news discourse.**

#### SPJ Code of Ethics

<https://www.spj.org/pdf/ethics/SPJ-Ethics-E-Book.pdf>

- Journalists have a concrete code of ethics that they can follow
- Gives Journalists a clear expectation of their civil responsibility
- The issue isn’t with the code, but the people who don’t look at the code

#### Why Public Relations Can No Longer Rely on Spin

<https://everything-pr.com/why-public-relations-can-no-longer-rely-on-spin-2/>

- Public Relations professionals are often called “spinners”
- Spinning stories loses integrity of Journalists
- Sometimes, a genuine honest statement is the best way to go



### Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training

<https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>

- Journalists are being targeted as distributors of “fake news”
- “A range of factors are transforming the communications landscape, raising questions about the quality, impact and credibility of journalism.”
- Handbook written to help give journalists tips on how to fight this public notion

## Internal Bias Research

### Oregon State Foundations of Epidemiology

<https://open.oregonstate.education/epidemiology/chapter/bias/>

- Bias can only be limited and it's by combating specific study biases
- Selection bias- When participants aren't drawn from the same population
- Healthy worker bias- “People that can work are generally healthier than the overall population because the overall population included people who are too sick to work”
- Misclassification bias- Classifying someone as something that they're not
- Publication bias- people will view their findings in a certain way in order to over exaggerate them. Exciting findings/stories get published.

## Civility Initiatives at other universities

### Austin's Civility Social Contract

<https://nicd.arizona.edu/blog/2020/12/11/austins-groundbreaking-new-social-contract-is-first-of-its-kind-in-nation/>

- Idea for an action: Social Contract
- Austin's social contract would not be a legal document, but rather serve as a “written agreement outlining a community's core values and instructs the direction of laws, regulations, policies, contracts, culture and more.”



## FINDING COMMON GROUND

### Nebraska's Student Led Civility Project

<https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/student-led-project-aims-to-increase-civil-discourse-on-campus/>

- The Peace and Civility project was adapted from a program developed by Minnesota's Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.
- The core values are listen, pay attention, show respect, apologize, don't gossip, be constructive, be inclusive, be open, and take responsibility.
- The project included retreats, promotional material, and posters to spread awareness of peace and civility

### Rutgers Project around Civility

<https://sas.rutgers.edu/news-a-events/news/newsroom/student-news/1058-draft-2-rutgers-project-advances-civility-on-campus-and-beyond2nd-draft-for>

- A two-year initiative called Project Civility, the goal being to engage students in a series of activities and discussions that aim to cultivate an environment of courtesy and compassion through thoughtful communication and interaction.
- Goals are very pragmatic
- Civility Panel with community leaders



# Survey Questions

## Student Media Survey

- 1.) How comfortable would you be to report on the following topics?
  - a.) Race
  - b.) Politics
  - c.) Gender
  - d.) Sexual Orientation
  - e.) Religion
- 2.) Do you recognize what internal bias is?
- 3.) Have you recognized internal bias within your own reporting?
  - a.) How do you think your own bias affects your reporting?
- 4.) Have you learned how to recognize and limit personal bias?
  - a.) Where have you learned this? (Example: Highschool, college, home, etc.)
- 5.) Do you know what civil discourse and incivility is?
- 6.) What is your understanding of how civil discourse affects reporting?
- 7.) Do you understand what role you play in improving civility within your reporting?
- 8.) Have you recognized incivility within your role in student media?
  - a.) What have you experienced regarding incivility in student media?
- 9.) Do you have the tools and resources to deal with this incivility? If yes, what are they?
- 10.) What can you do to improve civility within your reporting?
- 11.) Outside of KSU student media, how do you view civil discourse within the media?
- 12.) How do you think you can prevent incivility and bias within reporting at Kent State?



### College of Communication and Information Survey:

- 1.) How comfortable would you be to discuss the following topics?
  - a.) Race
  - b.) Politics
  - c.) Gender
  - d.) Sexual Orientation
  - e.) Religion
- 2.) Do you recognize what internal bias is?
  - a.) Have you recognized internal bias within the media?
- 3.) How do you think your own bias would affect the future work you do?
- 4.) Have you learned how to recognize and limit personal bias?
  - a.) Where have you learned this? (Example: In your classes, in your role for student media, at home, etc. )
- 5.) Do you know what civil discourse and incivility is?
- 6.) What is your understanding of how civil discourse affects the media?
- 7.) Do you understand what role you would play in improving civility within your future work?
- 8.) Do you have the tools and resources to deal with incivility? If yes, what are they?
- 9.) What could you do to improve civility within your future work?
- 10.) Outside of your school's student media, how do you view civil discourse within the media?
- 11.) How do you think you could prevent incivility and bias within your future work?



### Thank you

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